

October 2009

Santa Rosa County District 3 Newsletter

A Message From Your Commissioner



**District 3
Commissioner &
Commission Chair
W.D. "Don" Salter**

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2009 is almost history as we approach the end of the year and the upcoming holidays – my how time flies! This has been a very challenging year with our economy and declining local revenues. As most of you know, the BOCC had our final budget hearing on September 21 and approved the 2009/2010 budget at that time. This coming year will bring many new challenges as have the last two years. But as we all know, things will change and improve in the future. I personally thank each of you for the contributions you have made to our citizens and for doing an outstanding job in ensuring our county continues to be one of the most cost effective and customer focused in Florida.

We in Santa Rosa continue to enjoy a great county as we are much better off than many others. We are one of the only counties in the state with positive growth. Many industries and businesses continue to choose our county as their new homes. Our military bases continue to grow and prosper which has certainly been a positive force during these trying economic times. The military will continue to be our largest employer in the region with mission growth occurring at NAS Whiting Field, Pensacola Naval Air Station, Eglin Air Force Base and Hurlburt Field.

One of our greatest accomplishments during 2009 was the final signing of the new Whiting Aviation Park Limited Access Use Agreement. This agreement/contract was signed by NAS Whiting Field Commanding Officer, Capt. Rick Sadsad and I on July 31, at a special signing ceremony aboard Whiting Field. This agreement allows our county to construct and operate a 1,600 foot taxiway from our 269 acre Aviation Park onto Whiting's South Field 6,000 foot runway. In essence, this creates our own aviation maintenance/manufacturing air park which will create many high paying jobs in the future. This agreement was the first of its kind between Department of the Navy and any local government. The process took six years to accomplish and was developed by an outstanding partnership between Santa Rosa County and NAS Whiting Field. The agreement was further based on trust and demonstrated performance by our county to protect the mission of the base and increase military value of the installation. This wouldn't have been possible without the leadership of Capt. Sadsad and NAS Whiting staff! Once again, our military is strong and will continue to be a major part of Santa Rosa County for many years to come.

The month of November is a very special month to me, as I am sure it is to many others. First, November is Veterans Appreciation month with November 11 being Veterans Day. On this day, every American should take a few minutes and attend a Veterans Day Service and say "Thank You" to our veterans who have so bravely defended our many freedoms and helped bring peace and democracy to other parts of the world. Many of these brave men and women gave their lives for us so that we can continue to live in the greatest country in the world - America! As we should every day, be sure to say "Thank You" to a Veteran during November. We also will celebrate Thanksgiving on November 26. This will give us another opportunity to be thankful for many reasons: family, friends, good health, employment, our country, and many other reasons. But, once again, we should be thankful first and foremost for God, country and family.

This will be my last newsletter as chairman of the board. I thank each of you for your commitment to your jobs and your communities. I have truly been honored to serve you during this year and I look forward to many more successful years for our Great County!

Sincerely,
Don Salter
District 3 Commissioner & Commission Chair



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NAS Whiting Field Change of Command

Captain Peter Hall will relieve Captain Enrique L. Sadsad as Commanding Officer of NAS Whiting Field in a Change of Command Ceremony at 10 a.m. on Thursday November 5 in Building 1417 Atrium. Captain Sadsad's next duty assignment will be as Commanding Officer Of Naval Support Activity, Bahrain.

A Message From Captain Sadsad



Greetings from Exciting Whiting!

It has been a distinct privilege to serve as Naval Air Station Whiting Field's Commanding Officer for the past two years. I have been stationed at several "Navy towns", both at home and overseas, and I have not experienced the tremendous support and appreciation that the citizens of Santa Rosa County have given our military.

NAS Whiting Field has enjoyed a great relationship with the community and has benefited immensely from the proactive county and local governments whose branches are all working in harmony with each other towards the safety and prosperity of all Santa Rosans. Santa Rosa County, Milton, Pace, Navarre, Gulf Breeze, Jay, Chumuckla, and

neighboring communities represent what great societies are all about. The Board of County Commissioners and the various City Councils, along with the respective Chambers of Commerce, School District, Fire & Emergency and Law Enforcement Agencies, Military Affairs and Economic Development Councils, and many non-governmental organizations have made our community the most desirable place to live.

We have accomplished so much in protecting our military mission while promoting our county's economic development. Our partnership has been and will continue to be the Navy's model and the envy of many communities around the country. Further, our county is better poised for success despite the economic challenges because of our elected officials' vision and decisive actions.

As my change of command is rapidly approaching, I have been asked how I feel about leaving NAS Whiting Field, and I have always responded with having mixed feelings. The Whiting and Santa Rosa family is everything any commanding officer could ask for. I will certainly miss the wonderful people, the Southern hospitality, and most of all, the friendships that my wife Yvonne and I have made and will always cherish. But knowing that my relief, Captain Pete Hall, is a fine Naval Officer and a great American, Whiting will continue to be exciting and relevant while being a great neighbor and an asset to Santa Rosa County.

I cannot thank you enough but please always remember that the dedicated military and civilian professionals encompassing the Whiting Family will be forever indebted to your support, kindness, and teamwork.

Thank you, God Bless you, and God Bless the United States of America. Until we meet again...

Sincerely,

Captain Rick L. Sadsad
CO, NAS Whiting Field

A Message From Captain Hall

Thanks Commissioner Salter for giving me a chance to introduce myself, I'm Captain Pete Hall and my family (wife Jill and our four kids) and I arrived about a month ago from our last duty station in Washington D.C. My Navy career has taken us many places in the U.S., but no where else have we been so at home so quickly. Thank you for the warm and generous welcome to Santa Rosa County that my family and I have received. We are genuinely honored and excited to be here.

In my 24 years in the Navy I have never seen such a warm and close relationship between a community and its military base. I have been in awe as I follow Captain Sadsad around and see the tremendous relationship that exists between NAS Whiting Field and the community. This relationship works so well because of the tremendous people of Santa Rosa, I will try to continue in Captain Sadsad's footsteps to nurture this partnership between the base and the county. Captain Sadsad has done a magnificent job and I'll attempt to carry on his good work.

As my family and I continue to get to know the community we look forward to getting to know the area and all it has to offer. Thanks for the welcome and we look forward to the lasting friendships we'll form with the wonderful people of Santa Rosa.

Sincerely,

Captain Pete Hall





Santa Rosa District 3 News

Whiting Field Works With County to Reduce Encroachment



Naval Air Station Whiting Field and Santa Rosa County, Fla. signed an agreement Friday, July 31 to help spur economic growth in the county while protecting the base from residential encroachment. The Limited Access Use Agreement provides the county with restricted use of base runways for a proposed commercial aviation park located near the air station's east gate. The signing also guarantees that the county's nearly 270 acre plot will never be used for

residential building which could have been detrimental to the base's aviation training mission. The signing culminates nearly 10 years of ongoing negotiations between the county, the base, Navy Region Southeast and ultimately the Chief of Naval Operations.

In addition to promoting development of the land that is compatible to Whiting Field's training, the park is expected to attract businesses related to aviation maintenance. It is hoped that the project will bring high paying employment to Santa Rosa County while reducing the time it takes to complete complex maintenance procedures that require aircraft be moved to other facilities.

Future steps to the development of the aviation park include meeting with potential lessees and exploring funding opportunities including State of Florida Economic Development Infrastructure Grants, public/private partnerships and economic development bonds.

By Jay Cope, NAS Whiting Field Public Affairs

66th Anniversary of NAS Whiting Field

NAS Whiting Field will celebrate it's 66th Anniversary aboard the base from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., Saturday, October 24. The days' events kick off at 10 a.m., with a free concert by county music sensation Lonestar at 4 p.m. Aircraft static displays, aerial demonstrations, motorcycle displays, military parachutists, local craft and food vendors, model aircraft demonstrations, games for the kids, a Firefighters' demonstration and display, and the Navy New Orleans Ceremonial Band are just a few of the activities available to see and do. Additionally, local PGA superstar Boo Weekly will attend the celebration. Star of the 2008 Ryder Cup team and two time Verizon Heritage champion, Boo will have a booth open from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. where he will sign autographs and greet visitors while promoting his new line of clothing.

Both the Anniversary Celebration and concert are free and open to the public, but the concert requires a ticket for entrance. Tickets can be picked up at the MWR ITT, Golf Course and Liberty Center, Gulf Coast Outdoors on Highway 90 in Pace, Red Roof Inn on Avalon Boulevard, and Ollie's Neighborhood Grill on Highway 90 in Milton (Thursdays and Saturdays, 7-10 p.m.). WXBW 102.7 and Cat County 98.7 will be announcing additional ticket pickup locations as they become available.

Please no backpacks, cooler, cans, glass bottles, alcohol, pets, tents, bicycles, roller blades, skates, skateboards, cooking equipment or weapons of any kind. Since this will be festival seating for the concert, you are encouraged to bring folding chairs and blankets. Please contact (850) 665-6011 for additional information.

Operation Connect-Vet

Beginning December 1, Santa Rosa County Veterans who needed transportation to the Veterans Affairs Joint Ambulatory Care Center in Pensacola could apply for help via a new, free transportation service. Operation Connect-Vet was made possible by an Impact Grant from the Elks National Foundation to the Milton Elks Lodge #2377, in partnership with Santa Rosa County Veterans Services and Pensacola Bay Transportation.

An application is required and it may be obtained by calling (850) 981-7153 or by visiting the Santa Rosa County Veterans Services Website at www.santarosa.fl.gov/veterans. The veteran then calls 476-8130 to schedule a ride from home to the VA JACC.

Operation Connect-Vet had been postponed temporarily until additional funding was received as the \$10,000 from the Elks National Foundation was depleted. Thanks to some generous citizens and organizations, and the Santa Rosa County Board of County Commissioners, donations have allowed Connect Vet to resume as of September 17, 2009 through November 30, 2009.

Additional grants have been requested from the Disabled American Veterans National Service Fund and the Florida Brave Fund, as well as requests for donations from local veterans' organizations to keep this vital program funded indefinitely, as the purpose of the original grants were for initial program funding and are no longer a resource. If anyone has any questions or concerns please call (850) 981-7153. If anyone is interested in contributing to Operation Connect-Vet there are two ways to donate.

Checks can be sent to:

Operation Connect-Vet
United Bank
5907 Berryhill Medical Park Drive
Milton, FL 32570
Acct Operation Connect-Vet
#0602128101

For a tax certificate please send your check to:

Operation Connect-Vet
Elks National Foundation
Programs Dept.
2750 N. Lakeview Ave
Chicago, IL 60614-2256



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43rd Annual Santa Rosa County Farm Tour a Success

On Thursday, July 16, 225 local officials and area citizens participated in the 43rd Annual Santa Rosa County Farm Tour. On the day-long bus tour they learned first-hand of the importance of agriculture and forestry in the county and the issues facing local farmers. Stops on the tour included the Santa Rosa County Extension Demonstration Gardens, the Specialty Crops Program at the University of Florida Jay Research Farm, Frank Lowry Farms, Chumuckla Farmers' Opry, the Blackwater River State Forest Horse Stables Recreation Area, and Holland Farms.

A highlight of the tour was recognition of the Frank Lowry Family as "Outstanding Farm Family of the Year". Frank and his wife Melinda, along with their children



and grandchildren, accepted the award at their farm from County Commissioner Don Salter. The family also received congressional recognition at lunch from Congressman Jeff Miller's office. Frank is a third generation farmer and the youngest of 14 children. He has been farming for the past 40 years. Today the Lowry's raise a variety of vegetable and row crops on 800 acres.

The Farm Tour is organized each year by the Santa Rosa Agricultural Committee and conducted in cooperation with the Board of County Commissioners and numerous local supporters and corporate sponsors.

Chumuckla Community Center Hurricane Hardening Project Update

Bids for Phase II of hardening the Chumuckla Community Center were completed and Henry Norris and Associates was awarded oversight of the project. In order to complete the project, the community center will need to close for approximately three months to finish construction. Due to the functions already scheduled at the center, the decision was made to start this project after the first of the year. Currently the bidding process will resume November 1, with an anticipated start date of January 1 and a completion date of mid-April to May 2010.

The project is being funded by a federal Hazard Mitigation Grant Program administered through the Florida Division of Emergency Management. By strengthening the roof, walls and adding roll down shutters to windows and doors, the facility can be used as a public risk shelter as needed when the project is completed.

Emerald Coast Honor Flight Announces October Trip to Washington D.C.



On October 21, Emerald Coast Honor Flight will send 103 World II veterans from the First Congressional District to Washington D.C. to see their World War II memorial. This will mark the fifth flight since the inaugural trip on April 30, 2008. Since then, Emerald Coast Honor Flight has transported more than 400 World War II veterans to Washington to see their Memorial.

The World War II Memorial was completed 60 years after the end of the war, and

for many it was too late. Our surviving World War II veterans deserve to see their memorial and Emerald Coast Honor Flight is faced with the very real challenge and honor of getting these heroes to their memorial in time. According to the Department of Veterans Affairs and Arlington National Cemetery statistics we are losing approximately 1,200 World War II veterans each day. Thousands are on waiting lists for various honor flights around the country and Emerald Coast Honor Flight is asking the public for its support to help make the dreams of our World War II veterans come true.

As with the four previous Honor Flights, the October 21 trip will be made possible through the donations from individuals and corporate sponsors. The community's generous support ensures there is absolutely no cost for the veteran to travel. Emerald Coast Honor Flight will continue to schedule the trips to Washington, D.C. as long

as funds allow. The October 21 flight will depart Pensacola at 7 a.m. and return at 7 p.m. that evening. The public is encouraged to greet them at the Pensacola Gulfcoast Regional Airport upon their return. Congressman Miller will also meet the flight in Washington, D.C. and spend the day with the veterans.

The Emerald Coast Honor Flight Santa Rosa County Initiative is made up of leaders including elected officials, area chambers of commerce, businesses, and NAS Whiting Field who joined together to raise \$80,000 to send 100 of our WWII veterans to Washington, DC at no cost to them. Donations in any amount can also be made directly to the Santa Rosa County Veterans Memorial-Honor Flight fund, at 5191 C Willing St, Milton, FL 32570. All donations are tax deductible.